1. **INTRODUCTION**

This policy only applies to doctors and dentists in training in Scotland who are eligible to access study leave during their training programmes.

This policy and operational guide is underpinned by the study leave provisions contained within the Terms and Conditions of Service for doctors and dentists in training and appropriate Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate (SGHSCD) circulars.

2. **OBJECTIVES**

The overall purpose of this policy is to ensure that doctors or dentists in training, in conjunction with their Programme Directors (PDs), have access to a standardised system across Scotland in which applications for study leave are considered on a fair, equitable and consistent basis.

The policy acknowledges the fact that NHS Education for Scotland (NES) has a finite budget to support the study leave requirements of doctors and dentists in training and these funds are subject to external financial audit. PDs therefore have a responsibility to ensure that, in all instances, best “value for money” is achieved by focusing use of the available funding on core and mandatory curricular requirements.

3. **STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES**

The following general principles have guided the development of this combined policy and operational guide.
All doctors and dentists in training should develop coherent plans for study leave in the context of their training programme and curricular requirements, taking into account their individual educational needs as agreed with their PDs and/or Educational Supervisors.

Study leave activity should enhance clinical education and training with activities planned in advance. This should be done in conjunction with both “service” colleagues/units and the PD. Authority for any funding will come from the PD who will actively manage the budget for their training programme.

Study leave time is available to provide learning not easily available in the clinical setting, e.g. acquisition of a theoretical knowledge base such as basic sciences, statistics etc.

It is the doctor or dentist in training’s responsibility, in conjunction with their PD and/or Educational Supervisor, to prioritise and plan their respective training programme and to use of their study leave appropriately.

Study leave funding for trainees will be managed in relation to Training Programmes. A Notional Annual Allocation (NAA), which will be determined by the agreed number of posts in the Training Programme, will be calculated each year to form the basis of the budget to be managed by each PD. There will be no personal budgets or allowances directly allocated to individual doctors or dentists in training.

The purpose of the NAA is to allow Training Programme budgets to be set on an equitable basis. Whilst it may be used by PDs as a reference point it should not be viewed as a financial restriction on any individual doctors or dentists in training.

Where relevant, and where funding is available from their budget, PDs may procure appropriate resources e.g. DVDs, Course Materials/equipment, visiting lecturers etc which will benefit all of the doctors and dentists in training within the programme. Such local provision of materials and teaching events should mean that better “value for money” can be demonstrated with less money being spent on travel and subsistence expenses.
4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for Study Leave?

Only those trainees in educationally approved training programmes will be eligible for study leave funding, subject to the exceptions detailed in 4.2 below.

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for Study Leave?

- Doctors or dentists in training who defer entry to a Training Programme or who are “out of programme” e.g. in research, in out of programme clinical posts, or on a career break
- Military doctors or dentists in training, should claim from the relevant Forces service
- Retainees, such time is not recognised as formal training
- LAS (Locum Appointment for Service) appointees
- Doctors or dentists in training who have attained their CCT/CCST and who are in their period of grace

4.3 Number of Days

The number of days study leave available to doctors and dentists in training is highlighted in Sections 7, 8 and 9 below, covering Foundation Training for Doctors, Dental Foundation Training, Dental Core Training and Specialty Training including General Practice.

5. APPROVED USES OF STUDY LEAVE

5.1 Attendance at Courses

- Courses to assist with the acquisition of technical skills not easily acquired in the clinical setting
- Courses to assist with the acquisition of an appropriate knowledge base or specialist knowledge associated with clinical training
• Professional Development Courses, in preparation for the many facets of the trainees’ future roles as a Consultant/Specialist in the NHS

• E-Learning, with the appropriate educational approval from the PD, recognised educational courses and training may be undertaken using e-technology

• Local half-day or day release courses, including “Regional Teaching”, which take the doctor or dentist in training away from service, e.g. when doctors or dentists in specialty training travel to one central location to participate in postgraduate teaching.

5.2 Specialty Association Meetings

• Attendance at Specialty Association meetings or conferences

• To take agreed professional and academic examinations. Whilst doctors and dentists in training are entitled to time off for such examinations, the only expenses claimable may be for associated travel, accommodation and subsistence. Exam fees are not refundable (see Section 6 below).

5.3 Private Study

This should be no more than one week per exam and can only be granted at the “discretion of the service”. Private study leave should serve a specific, defined purpose. Its aims and objectives should be discussed and agreed between the doctor or dentist in training and their PD and/or Educational Supervisor.

5.4 In-House Courses

Where relevant, the study leave budget may be used to provide appropriate local training for the benefit of as many of their trainees as possible. An example of this may be to invite external speakers/experts to come to a central point to provide local training in support of identified educational priorities for a group of doctors in training. In such circumstances, the Deanery can provide guidance and assistance to fund relevant expenses and have the costs “charged” to the programme budget rather than identifying expenditure against individual doctors or dentists in training. Such events should be encouraged as a means of providing “value for money”.

Updated – July 2015
5.5 Local/Generic Teaching (Core and ST)

Trainees who attend local or generic teaching provided by a training programme which supports the objectives and competencies set out in the specialty Curriculum should apply for study leave through Turas. This may include, teaching held on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly basis for foundation, core or specialty including GP trainees.

6. EXCLUSIONS FROM STUDY LEAVE

Study leave will not be approved to support the following activities:

- Unit meetings or other in-hospital meetings, such as audit meetings, not specifically organised for the doctors or dentists in training
- Travel to/from training attachments out-with the Programme Region, including overseas attachments
- Examination Fees
- University provided Postgraduate and Degree courses
- Attendance at graduation ceremonies
- Recruitment/Job interviews
- ARCP attendance
- Personal study books, presentation posters or other educational materials

7. FOUNDATION TRAINING FOR DOCTORS

In line with the UKFPO’s “Foundation Programme Reference Guide (2012)” updated for 2014, the following study leave provisions apply to doctors in Foundation Training programmes.
7.1 Generic Teaching and Study Leave

The generic teaching programme and study leave are provided to support the objectives of the Foundation Programme. In particular, both the generic teaching programme and study leave should be used to support the acquisition of the competences set out in the Curriculum and to enable foundation doctors to explore career options.

There should be a generic teaching programme in both FY1 and FY2. The generic teaching programme should be mapped to the Curriculum. A register of attendance should be maintained and a minimum of 70% attendance or equivalent should be achieved.

Study leave time, which has not been allocated to the generic teaching programme, may be taken as long as this is consistent with maintaining clinical services. Study leave must be agreed in advance to avoid disruption to services and it must be supported by the Programme Director or Foundation Lead.

It can only be used to:

- support the aims of the Foundation Programme
- achieve the foundation outcomes
- explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development

7.2 Foundation Doctors in Foundation Year One (FY1)

FY1 doctors are entitled to three hours of in-house, formal education as part of their working week which should be relevant, protected (‘bleep-free’) and appropriate to their FY1 training. Foundation doctors must be released to attend and should give their pagers to someone else so that they can take part.

This in-house, formal education may be aggregated to release whole days for generic training during FY1. The generic teaching programme should be mapped to the Curriculum.
FY1 doctors may not normally apply for study leave. However, in Scotland, arrangements exist to enable FY1 doctors to explore and undertake specialty “Tasters” and/or ALS attendance towards the end of their FY1 year, if this is deemed appropriate by the Programme Director or Foundation Lead. Such activities will need to be formally applied for and approved in line with current procedures.

7.3 Foundation Doctors in Foundation Year Two (FY2)

FY2 doctors may receive three hours of in-house, formal education as part of their working week which should be relevant, protected (‘bleep-free’) and appropriate to their FY2 training.

FY2 doctors may take up to 30 days study leave during their FY2 year, as long as this is consistent with maintaining essential service.

During the FY2 year, attendance at foundation teaching sessions is compulsory. Formal education programmes which support generic professional training are part of the foundation doctor’s study leave allowance and should offer a minimum of 10 days training per annum, and should be mapped to the Curriculum. Both study leave funding and time available to FY2 doctors can be used for the generic teaching programme.

Up to 3 days will normally be required to allow FY2 doctors to attend their ALS course, unless ALS has been completed during FY1.

Study leave funding will be available for a maximum of one ALS course attendance per trainee during their Foundation programme (normally in FY2).

Up to a further 10 days in the FY2 year may be available to doctors to explore specialties of interest “Tasters”. Where a good case for such experience is presented to the Programme Director or Foundation Lead by a doctor in training then a maximum of 5 days will be permitted in any 4 month block/placement. As highlighted above, “Tasters” may actually be taken from 1 April in the FY1 year so that the experience can be used to inform subsequent career choice and minimise service disruption.
The balance of FY2 study leave days (approx 6 days) will be available for other study leave activities. However, this will not attract any study leave funding.

Study leave should not be used to prepare for specialist examinations during foundation training. However, whilst study leave may be used to sit a specialist examination, attendance at such examinations will not attract any funding from NHS Education for Scotland’s study leave budget.

8. DENTAL FOUNDATION AND CORE TRAINING

8.1 Dental Foundation Trainees (also known as Dental Vocational Trainees)

These types of trainees may not apply for study leave.

8.2 Longitudinal Dental Foundation Trainees (LDFTs)

LDFTs in year two of training (LDFT2) may take up to 5 days study leave from non-practice days, in addition to the generic education programme.

Study leave time, which has not been allocated to the generic education programme, may be taken as long as this is consistent with maintaining clinical services. Study leave must be agreed in advance to avoid disruption to services and it must be supported by the Core Training Adviser.

It can only be used to:

- support the aims of the LDFT Programme
- explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development

8.3 Dental Core Trainees (DCTs)

The generic education programme and study leave are provided to support the objectives of the Dental Core Training Programme.

There should be a generic education programme in both DCT1 and DCT2. A register of attendance should be maintained and a minimum of 70% attendance or equivalent needs to be achieved by the trainees.
Study leave time, which has not been allocated to the generic education programme, may be taken as long as this is consistent with maintaining clinical services. Study leave must be agreed in advance to avoid disruption to services and it must be supported by the Core Training Adviser.

It can only be used to:

- support the aims of the DCT Programme
- explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development

9. **SPECIALTY TRAINING (including General Practice)**

Regulatory guidance permits Specialty doctors and dentists in training (including Specialist Registrars (SpRs), Specialty Registrars (STs), GPSTs, and LATs) up to 30 days study leave per annum.

For the purposes of recording days taken, the study leave year will be pro-rated from the doctor or dentist in training’s date of appointment. There is no carry forward of unused days from one training year to the next.

PDs will manage their Training Programme study leave budgets which will be allocated on the basis of a Notional Annual Allocation. Budgets will be allocated each Financial Year, commencing on 1 April.

Where the study leave activity extends over a weekend or Bank Holiday then these leave days will be deducted from the individual’s leave entitlement. Similarly, if the leave activity is on a day when the individual is not due to be working then an application should still be submitted prior to the activity for authorisation and recording against entitlement.

In respect of GPST Attachment Days, where a trainee spends time in their respective Training Practice and in the hospital component of training, trainees should apply for Study Leave through Turas. Current regulations provide for a maximum of 4 days in any financial year, equivalent to 2 days in each six-monthly training period.
10. ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications for study leave should be made online via Turas, the NES Trainee Management System. NES will not accept study leave applications unless they are made via Turas. Study leave applications completed on paper forms will be returned to the individual.

Completion of the form on-line will allow for a declaration to be completed by the trainee that permissions have been sought for time out of clinical duties. Once this is completed an automated email will be sent to the selected PD for approval.

Turas will not allow retrospective study leave applications to be made therefore leave must be planned in advance of the activity taking place. As much detail as possible regarding the activity should be entered, all mandatory fields must be completed and, where applicable, realistic estimates of all cost elements should be entered to allow full consideration by the PD.

Any applications for “Leave Only”, without reclaimable expenses, should still be submitted in line with the guidance above. Such applications still need appropriate service and PD approval however they will not result in the subsequent provision of a claim form. In such cases, an automated email will be sent to the applicant.

10.1 Responsibilities for Form Submission - Trainee

It should be noted that overall responsibility for applications lies with the doctor or dentist in training until such time as the form is submitted to Turas. All applications submitted can be viewed on-line via the applicant’s personal page on Turas. Please note that receipts must not be submitted at this stage of the on-line process.

10.2 Service Approval

As part of the process each application requires appropriate approval from the doctor or dentist in training’s head of service and/or rota master which confirms that service cover arrangements have been considered in light of the application. The name of this individual should be entered as part of the on-
line form. Failure to provide a named individual will result in the application not being saved.

The application process requires trainees to make a declaration that they have sought appropriate permission for leave from the clinical area. Should this be found to be untrue, this will be treated as a probity issue and trainees may be reported to the GMC or GDC.

10.3 Programme Director

The PD has management responsibility for all educational activities undertaken as part of their Training Programme. As such, they will be expected to fully assess the application in light of educational need and relevance as well as financial considerations in relation to their budget. Their decision based on all available information and is recorded by the completion of the on-line application. Once completed by the PD the application will automatically be forwarded to the Deanery.

PDs have the discretion to approve any application but with a maximum financial restriction. Trainees will be able to view the status of their application(s) via their personal page on Turas.

10.4 Retrospective Applications

Turas will not allow for retrospective study leave applications.

10.5 Direct Payments to Course/Conference Organisers

NES is unable to make direct payments to course organisers. Trainees must pay the costs and claim back the approved expenses from NES, see Section 11 below. Please note that any unsolicited invoices received by the Deanery will not be paid.

10.6 Non Attendance/Cancellation of Study Leave Activity
The doctor or dentist in training can withdraw a study leave application at any point in the process. There may be a number of reasons why an approved application is withdrawn:

- Cancellation of Course
- Unable to attend (personal circumstances)

This action will result in the application being removed marked as Withdrawn in the trainee’s personal record on Turas.

10.7 Receipts/Proof of Payment

No receipts should ever be sent to the Deanery prior to the funding approval email being received or being attached to the appropriate claim form.

10.8 Non-Approval of Leave Applications

Where an application for study leave application is not supported by the PD these will still be automatically submitted to the deanery office and logged against an individual training record with the reason as part of NES Quality Assurance arrangements.

A doctor or dentist in training can view the status of applications via their own personal training page on Turas.

Any outstanding issues or concerns about the decision should be referred directly to the PD.

11. CLAIMS PROCESS

An expense claim form will automatically be sent to the claimant if expenses have been applied for and approved with funding or approved with limited funding. Trainees can review the application form once the original application has been approved by the PD.
In cases where a completed and approved application form is submitted without any estimate of costs then it will be assumed that the study leave activity will not incur any expenditure. As such, no claim form will be generated and the PD’s decision will be based on the assumption of no costs being claimed.

The doctor or dentist in training should fully complete the claim form before returning it, with original receipts securely attached, to the Deanery. In cases where Internet bookings have been made, print outs of “Proof of Purchase” will be accepted. It is essential that the GMC or GDC number is fully completed on the claim form to ensure no delay in payment. Certificates of Attendance, Invoices or Fee Notes are not accepted as a receipt. The amounts paid/received must be stated on the receipt for it to be valid.

Claim forms can be submitted at any time after the initial application has been formally approved by the PD. Normally expenses will not be reimbursed until after the event. Claim forms must be returned to the Deanery no later than 3 months after the study leave activity has finished. Unless there are specific mitigating circumstances, claims received after this deadline will not be processed and will be returned to the doctor or dentist in training.

Approved and receipted expenses will be reimbursed by cheque via NES Central Office and they will be sent to the name and address detailed on the claim form. NES process cheques on a weekly basis so payment delays will be kept to a minimum.

11.1 Information Guidance regarding Subsistence Rates

Please remember that all expense claims MUST be accompanied by ORIGINAL tickets, receipts etc. No payment will be made until such evidence is received by the Deanery. Invoices are not receipts or proof of payment. Where available, a copy of your “Certificate of Attendance” should be submitted with the claim form. Each expense claim must show the date and time that the claimant left home and returned.
11.2 Fee

Trainees should pay fees and claim back the costs and should include the original receipt, no direct payments can be made to organizers.

11.3 Travel

Please note that the cheapest form of transport should be used at all times. No First Class Travel will be reimbursed unless it can be proved to be cheaper than Standard Class Travel. If not cheaper, the Standard Class Fare for the equivalent journey will be reimbursed.

All claims for reimbursement of train, plane, taxi fares etc, if applicable, MUST be accompanied by ORIGINAL receipts. Boarding Passes are not classed as a receipt.

**Mileage Allowance:** 24p per mile (Public Transport Rate)

**Additional Passenger:** 5p per mile per passenger (this must be entered separately, and the name of the passenger clearly stated)

Costs for appropriate insurance cover for relevant approved leave will not be reimbursed.

11.4 Accommodation

**Commercial:** Actual receipted costs of bed and breakfast up to a maximum of £75.00 per night

**Non-Commercial:** Reimbursement of actual costs incurred up to £25.00 per night, receipts up to the amount claimed must be enclosed

11.5 Substance

- Actual receipted costs up to the following maximum limits:
- Absence of 5-10 hours (must include 12.00-2.00pm) a maximum of £5.00
• Absence exceeding 10 hours (must end after 7.00pm) a maximum of £15.00
• Full 24 Hour Period a maximum of £20.00
• Course Dinners will only be reimbursed up to a maximum of £20.00
• There will be no reimbursement for alcoholic drinks included in receipts

11.6 Cancelled Events

Should the event that you are claiming for be subsequently cancelled then it is your responsibility to inform the Programme Director and the Deanery so that your study leave records can be updated. Any refunds from course providers should be made out to "NHS Education for Scotland", where possible, however if you are personally refunded then please contact your Deanery to arrange repayment as soon as possible.

11. Study Leave Appeals Procedure

Where a study leave application is rejected by the trainee’s Clinical Director/Supervising Consultant/Head of Department on service grounds the trainee should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their Programme Director.

If the study leave application is rejected by the PD on educational or other grounds and the doctor or dentist in training is dissatisfied with this outcome then they should, in the first instance, discuss the reasons directly with the PD in an attempt to resolve the issue.

In exceptional circumstances*, where the trainee remains dissatisfied with the outcome after discussions with both their Clinical Director/Supervising Consultant/Head of Department and their PD then the doctor or dentist in training should formally write to their relevant Lead Postgraduate Dean, outlining in full their grounds for complaint. The Lead Dean will consider the complaint and, if applicable, investigate the full facts of the application before informing the trainee their final decision.
* not being fully aware of NES’ study leave procedures does not constitute “exceptional circumstances”

12. CONTACTS

Dental trainees please contact: dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Medical trainees please contact:

West and East: weststudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk

North: Idris.Abubakar@nes.scot.nhs.uk

South East: Fenghui.Yu@nes.scot.nhs.uk

13. PROCESS FLOWCHART

Trainees apply for Study Leave by logging onto Turas and completing the “create application process”. Trainee selects save & submit.

Automated email is sent to the PD, to review application. PD can either support application or not by selecting the appropriate decision and selecting save & submit.

Automated email is sent to the trainee with the PD decision and if appropriate, and a link to a claim form. **Do not** send any receipts at this stage. Trainees should send original receipts within 3 months of the end date of the leave.

Once the claim form and receipts are received by the Deanery, the claim is processed and sent weekly to NES Central Office in Edinburgh who process and send out cheques to the address stated on the claim form. If receipts are missing, trainees will be emailed asking to submit before the claim is processed.